

Cardiovascular Health

Did you know that in the United States, *more women die from heart disease* than from any other cause, including all types of cancer?

What is Cardiovascular (heart) disease?

Coronary artery disease is the main form of heart disease. It develops over many years and affects the blood vessels of the heart. It can result in a heart attack, disability, and/or death. A heart attack occurs when an artery becomes blocked, preventing oxygen from getting to the heart.

Many women fail to recognize the seriousness of heart disease. One reason may be the common thought that heart disease can be “cured” with surgery. Surgery can help restore blood and oxygen flow to the heart, but the heart remains damaged.

- Heart disease kills one woman every minute
- 90% of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease
- An average of 2,200 Americans die of heart disease each day (one death every 39 seconds)
- More than 82 million American adults are estimated to have one or more types of heart disease; this is 1 out of every 3 people

Risk Factors:

Risk factors are habits or conditions that increase your chance of having a disease. Many of the risk factors for heart disease can be prevented or controlled. Having more than one risk factor for heart disease can multiply your risk of a heart attack. Risk factors for heart disease are:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol
- Overweight/Obesity
- Physical Inactivity
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Family history of heart disease
- Age

Steps You Can Take for a Healthier Heart:

Smoking: Don't smoke or quit if you do. Ask your health care provider for strategies to help you quit.

Blood Pressure: Control your blood pressure. Ask your health care provider what a healthy number is for you and how often you need your blood pressure checked.

Cholesterol: Lower your cholesterol to the right level, based on your personal risk. Eat foods low in cholesterol and saturated fats.

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Be Active // Be Healthy

Overweight/Obesity: Ask your health care provider what a healthy weight is for you. Lose or maintain weight with physical activity most days of the week and a diet that includes plenty of whole grain products, fruits and vegetables.

Physical Activity: Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week for a weekly total of at least 150 minutes. Moving any part of your body- even for a short time- can make you healthier.

Diabetes: A normal fasting blood glucose level is below 100. Talk with your health care provider about when you should be tested, and what your glucose level is. If you have diabetes, monitor and control your blood sugar levels regularly.

Every Woman Matters Cares about Your Heart Health:

The Every Woman Matters Program can help you receive a free or low-cost health exam that includes screenings for heart disease. In addition to breast and cervical cancer screenings, women ages 40 through 74 are eligible for height, weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, blood cholesterol and diabetes screenings.

Every Woman Matters clients who have been screened for heart disease can also receive information and support related to improved nutrition, increased physical activity and tobacco cessation.

What Else Can You Do To Stay Heart Healthy?

There are many things you can do to help keep your cholesterol low. Everyone can lower his or her chances of developing high cholesterol, regardless of age! Here's how:

- Check your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar regularly
- Be physically active
- Eat a healthy diet high in fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt and sodium
- Keep a healthy weight and lose weight if you are overweight
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation
- If you use tobacco, stopping is the best thing you can do for your heart

Resources:

American Heart Association

www.heart.org

National Heart, Lung, & Blood Association

www.hearttruth.gov

Nebraska Nutrition & Activity for Health

www.dhhs.ne.gov/nafh

Make the Call, Don't Miss a Beat

www.womenshealth.gov/heartattack

Nebraska Cardiovascular Health Program

www.dhhs.ne.gov/cvh

Nebraska Diabetes Prevention & Control Program

www.dhhs.ne.gov/diabetes

WomenHeart: National Coalition for Women & Heart Disease

www.womenheart.org

For More Information:

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

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